

**Downtown Surrey BIA**  
**Questions for Council Candidates 2018**

1. What makes you think you are qualified to run as councillor?

I have been working on a number of municipal issues during the past year in Surrey. Overall I found the experience frustrating due to the current city council. I'm ready and willing to run for city council because I would like a city council which has meaningful consultation with local communities on all projects, programs, and infrastructure. I want a city that uses best practices in all aspects of City business.

I was previously elected as a park commissioner in the city of Vancouver becoming the country's first elected Green. During my term I advocated successfully for a ban on cetaceans at the Vancouver Aquarium, coexisting with coyotes project, free bus in Stanley Park, and the first aboriginal park naming in history. I also advocated for maintaining universal recreation facility access and served on a number of committees, to hear about their concerns on a regular basis. I also held regular meetings with the public in order to bring forward their concerns and issues to the board.

2. What skills do you bring to Council if you are elected?

I have many years experience working with different demographics, institutions, and levels of government towards common goals. I speak several languages and have worked in diverse cultural and linguistic communities. I am tenacious, have good research skills, and never give up until the job is done.

3. In your opinion, what do you think is the most positive thing that has happened in Surrey recently that makes you proud to live in here?

I'm really proud of the various communities across the city that have become involved in advocating on a variety of issues of concern to themselves and their future generations. Civic involvement is on the upswing, and this bodes well for a healthy vibrant future for the City of Surrey. The issues and campaigns of concern to the citizens of Surrey are as diverse as the people themselves. Social, cultural, ecological and economic issues are at the heart of civic involvement in Surrey.

4. Are you committed to a strong City Centre and the creation of a vibrant Downtown core? What is your strategy and commitment to business - arts – culture – technology and community in Downtown Surrey?

A strong City Center has lots of green spaces, public programming, community centers, and social and cultural events. Safety in our community comes from eyes on the street, when people are jogging, walking the dog, riding their bike, walking to local businesses, going about their daily work and family lives. The best communities have everything that people need within walking distance. For this reason we need to have work, education, social, cultural, and leisure activities all within reach. We need to support diverse businesses so people do not have to go outside the community to buy food, services, and so on. The city needs to support small businesses which best meet the needs of local people, and provide employment opportunities too. As a city councilor I will work with the local community, all levels of government, relevant institutions and organizations, to develop long-term sustainable programs, services, and infrastructure.

**Downtown Surrey BIA**  
**Questions for Council Candidates 2018**

5. The Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association had advocated for the past five years for a professionally managed purpose-built shelter in Surrey. What is your commitment to have this project move forward?

I am in favor of this personally, although I would like to see a community consultation on this issue first. I would go a step further, in my platform I advocate for a interdisciplinary City team working specifically on housing and homelessness. It would include members from all City departments as well as local organizations and academia. It would meet on a regular basis to develop and implement short and long-term plans around issues of housing and homelessness in the city of Surrey. Currently too many people are falling through the cracks, and the city is not using best practices in this area and others. I'm committed to bringing best practices on housing and homelessness to the city.

6. What do you see as the top five issues facing Surrey?

People in Surrey tell me they want to see genuine meaningful consultation happening on all projects, services, and infrastructure being planned for the city...at an early stage when their concerns can be dealt with before decisions are made. People are concerned about homelessness, they're either concerned about the people who are homeless or about safety issues around the issue of addictions. We need to provide immediate solutions for people facing homelessness, I suggest opening unused municipal buildings to provide people with shelter, showers, toilets, cooking facilities, and rooms to receive services as well as to sleep. Another issue people are very concerned about is the decreasing green spaces in our city...in what used to be called the city of parks. As any real estate agent knows, the value of a property goes down when there is no attached Green Space. So it is in nobody's interest to develop a City without green spaces in every available corner. In City Center we need more mini parks and dog parks as well as shared green spaces that have a public and private responsibility, such as patio spaces run jointly by local business and the city park department. This allows people from the cafe to enjoy an outside space, and passersby the chance to take a load off their feet. Another issue of local concern is accessible public transit, for which I'm advocating expanding bus service as well as expanded hours of service. That would allow people to be out around town extended hours - giving more opportunities for businesses and increased community involvement. Regarding transit I am advocating for improvements in the path system in the city of Surrey... So that cyclists and others using non-motorized vehicular modes of transport can get around the city without having to cross dangerous roads. I'm thinking not only of bicyclists, but also pedestrians, people who use motorized scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, skateboards, and rollerblades to get around. A lot of people are also concerned about Hood security in Surrey and for this reason of advocating to protect agricultural land Reserve Land in our jurisdiction. Also advocating for more Local Economic programming such as farmers markets, Farm Folk City Folks, as well as increased availability of Community Gardens and so on. Regarding organic material we also need increased pickup of organics and recycling in the city, which will then allow us to reduce garbage pickup, saving the city a small fortune.

7. We know there is always a debate between perception and reality. Everyone wants a safe place to live and do business. What is your strategy to deal with the root causes of crime?

We need to deal with inequalities in our society. If people feel a part of society, included, respected, they will be less likely to try to destroy it. If people are proud of their community they will want to

**Downtown Surrey BIA**  
**Questions for Council Candidates 2018**

protect it. I think civic pride campaigns such as best storefront, best garage, best greengrocer, best service provider etc. would encourage people to think about not only of their own business but also those around them. If people are out and around there is much less likely to be crime on the streets. When people feel safe on the street they're more likely to be there so it's important to have a presence.

Practically speaking, I am in agreement with programs such as BarWatch where gangsters are not allowed in local businesses. Gangsters and other thugs need to know they're not welcome in our communities, in our businesses, and in our parks.

More police will not necessarily solve crime. We need to attack the root issues of the conditions that cause people to end up on the criminal path. I've long felt that the empowerment of women is very important to stop gang violence. If gangsters didn't have the support of their mothers, girlfriends, and so on they'd be much less likely to continue down that path. If the women in their lives felt empowered enough to leave toxic situations these guys would end up alone. Maybe then they'd reconsider their choices.

8. Do you support child care space in private developments?

Yes I do. I think it would be a great idea to have childcare integrated into planning decisions at the initial stages. It would increase the participation of women in the workplace and improve people's lives economically and socially.

9. How should requests for decreased amenity space in new residential or mixed-use developments (both indoor and outdoor) be addressed by the City?

Carefully. Amenities greatly influence the livability of our communities. As a former elected official from Vancouver I saw how important the community amenities were to the development of thriving communities. Surrey needs to take great care to sustain and improve community amenities in all parts of our city. Unfortunately we don't have the Community Charter here, which we found so helpful to the city to gain wonderful amenities for all to enjoy.

10. The temporary modular housing is scheduled to be removed from the locations in Downtown Surrey in two years. Do you support the City's housing strategy that moves people from the current temporary housing into supportive housing throughout the City? If not, what is your solution?

I don't think the city has made sufficient plans to be able to move everybody out of modular housing into permanent housing in the time frame of two years. Let's call a spade a spade, the time frame required for a housing project from planning to a key in the door is between five and seven years. I don't think the city can say they've got enough units planned for all the people they're putting into modular housing right now. It's a pipe dream to think that will happen in 2 years. Unless the city and other levels of government make outstanding efforts this is not going to happen no matter what they've told you. I suspect people will be in modular housing long past the two-year mark, because they have nowhere else to go. A 0% vacancy rate and the plans to destroy existing aging rental stock will not result in housing gains for those in the lowest income levels. Most of the aging rentals will be replaced by condos and purpose-built rentals with rents which start at between two and three hundred percent higher than the current rental rates. This is not the same demographic the folks in modular housing fit into. So I don't know

**Downtown Surrey BIA**  
**Questions for Council Candidates 2018**

why the city is promising to get them into permanent housing when they are not planning on building anything they can afford

11. How would you make Council decisions more transparent?

We need to use Best Practices on this as with all City issues. The City needs to direct staff to interact in a cooperative manner with members of the public on all projects, services, and infrastructure developments. There needs to be genuine public consultation at the early stages when any changes, alterations, or cancellations can take place before decisions are written in stone.

12. What do you think is the priority for public transit South of the Fraser? What do you support?

I'm in favour of increased bus service and increased hours of service. There's also the possibility of resurrecting the Interurban line. My understanding is this would require less infrastructure because the old infrastructure is still in place. I'm categorically opposed to the LRT and SkyTrain in Surrey. We need dedicated bus lanes during rush hour on commuter routes as well as divided bike lanes for bike commuters. We need to improve the connectivity of the path system in our city to connect with paths in other jurisdictions. This will help address issues relating to connectivity, safety, and accessibility for not only cyclists, but also pedestrians, and others using transportation other than cars. For example wheelchairs, walkers, strollers, motorized scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, and emerging green technologies.